

God's Wisdom

James speaks to us in common language. *The Message* says, "It's the way you live . . . that counts. . . . Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others' throats" (3:13-17). His philosophy of life is easy to remember: "Live well, live wisely, live humbly."

Living well, for me, means being self-aware, noticing how my words and actions affect others. Is the result of my interaction with others a deepening of care and compassion? Recently I noticed that I was often comparing myself to others, coveting their experiences and the affection others had for them, and I felt those thoughts were wrong. I decided to pray these words each time I became aware of such thoughts: "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

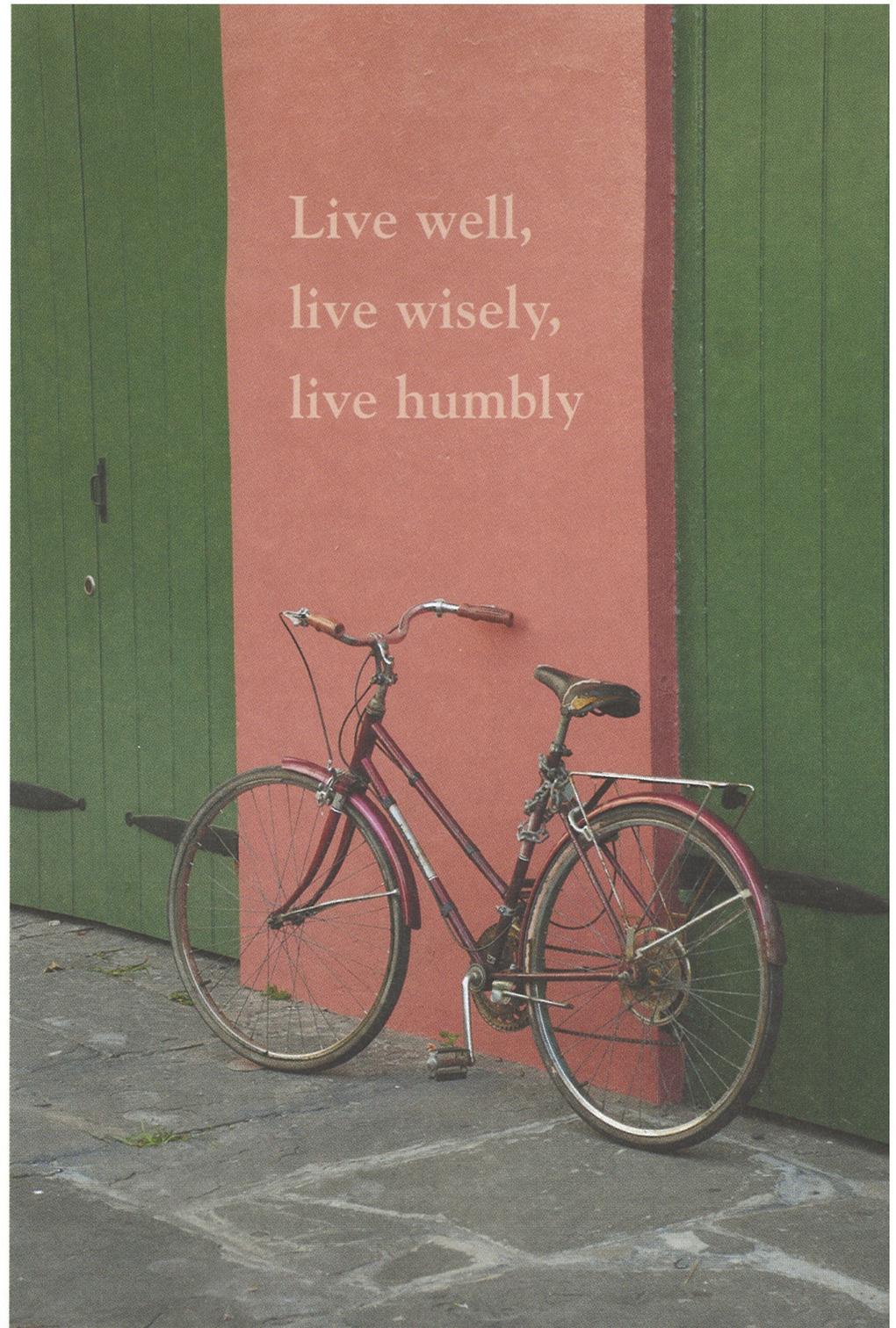
Living wisely comes with time and experience. After a season of practicing this prayer, I noticed a change in my response to others. When I heard about someone experiencing a special moment, I was happy for them. Only years later did I learn of this saying, attributed to several wise persons: "Comparison is the thief of joy."

Living humbly is a constant dance. I feel on top of the world when I am in control, doing what I want to do. And then there are avalanches of events in the world I have little control over that get me down. James addresses how we let go and seek God's wisdom: "Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. . . . So let God work his will in you" (4:1-2a, 7a).

—Beverly Eikenberry
North Manchester, Indiana

Text for today: "Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do: *Live well, live wisely, live humbly*. It's the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts. Mean-spirited ambition isn't wisdom. Boasting that you are wise isn't wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourselves sound wise isn't wisdom. It's the furthest thing from wisdom—it's animal cunning, devilish plotting. Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others' throats. Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced" (James 3:13-17, *MSG*). **Bible readings for today:** Jeremiah 11:18-20; Psalm 54; James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a (13); Mark 9:30-37.

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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

MORNING WORSHIP

10:45 AM

September 19, 2021

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE "He Leadeth Me" (Young)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Listen to the good news. God is with us, this day and every day.

All: **Because God is with us, we can face each day with courage. We can find some good in everything, for we are never completely alone.**

One: God's goodness sometimes seems to be a trickle, sometimes pulsing spurts, and sometimes a mighty flood. But always God is with us.

All: **We worship you, O God, for your goodness. We praise you with our songs. We seek you in our prayers. We offer ourselves to you because you are our God.**

*HYMN #16 "God is here among us"

[Verse 1]

God is here among us: let us all adore him, and with awe appear before him.

God is here within us: soul in silence fear him, humbly, fervently draw near him.

Now his own who have known God in worship lowly yield their spirits wholly.

[Verse 2]

Come, abide within me; let my soul, like Mary, be thine earthly sanctuary.

Come, indwelling Spirit, with transfigured splendor; love and honor will I render.

Where I go here below, let me bow before thee, know thee, and adore thee.

[Verse 3]

Gladly we surrender earth's deceitful treasures, pride of life, and sinful pleasures.

Gladly, Lord, we offer thine to be forever, soul and life and each endeavor.

Thou alone shalt be known Lord of all our being, life's true way decreeing.

*OPENING PRAYER

You watch over us, O God, and show us the way to prosper in life, not so much in things as in relationships that contribute to our wholeness and well-being. Thank you for meeting us here and helping us to deal

with our selfish ambition, disorder, and conflicts. We submit ourselves to you for instruction. Help us to be honest with ourselves and with you, voicing our doubts as well as our faith, our hypocrisy along with all that is deeply genuine. Create in us a space for quiet listening and thoughtful meditation. Amen.

A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE CHILDREN

BLESSING OF MICAH'S BACKPACKS

SERVICE OF GIVING

Call to Giving

With free-will offerings, we will sacrifice to God, giving thanks for mercies too abundant to count. We want to share all that has been entrusted to our keeping, that God may be praised, and peace may come to all God's people.

If you have not done so already, you may place your offering in the plate at the front of the chancel during the offertory or after the service. If you are watching on facebook live or the HCOB webpage, we virtually pass the offering plate to you this morning. You can prepare your offering to be mailed or to be dropped off at the church this week; or you can use Paypal on the Hagerstowncob webpage.

Offertory "Autumn Glory" (Riggs)

*Doxology #119 "Praise God from whom"

*Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us pray. We who have spent much on our own pleasures are pleased to share that others may obtain the necessities of body and spirit. Thank you, God for this opportunity to support the ministry and mission of our congregation. May there be a harvest of righteousness among us, shown in the peaceful handling of disputes, in mutual love and support, and in courageous outreach to people near and far who need help we can give. Bless each gift and giver. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

Please remember our worship is also on Facebook Live and our website.

Please do not share any personal information you do not want to be made public.

An usher will hold the microphone for you while you share.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(continued)

TEMPLE CHOIR *"On Jordan's Stormy Bank I Stand"* (Stennett)

SCRIPTURE READING: Readers' Theatre - James 3:13 – 4:3, 7-8a

- One: If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom.
- Two: But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom.
- One: Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.
- Two: But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.
- One: And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.
- Two: What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you?
- One: You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it.
- Two: You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them.
- One: Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it.
- Two: And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.
- One: So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

MESSAGE *"Heavenly Smarts"*
Pastor Twyla Rowe

***HYMN #544** *"When we walk with the Lord"*

[Verse 1]

When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way! While we do his good will, he abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey.

[Refrain]

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

[Verse 2]

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, but our toil he doth richly repay. Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross, but is bless'd if we trust and obey.

[Refrain]

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

[Verse 3]

But we never can prove the delights of his love until all on the altar we lay; for the favor he shows, for the joy he bestows, are for them who will trust and obey.

[Refrain]

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

[Verse 4]

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at his feet, or we'll walk by his side in the way. What he says we will do, where he sends we will go; never fear, only trust and obey.

[Refrain]

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

***BENEDICTION**

After the Benediction, you may be seated. Please continue in a spirit of worship as we listen to the Postlude music.

***POSTLUDE** *"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"* (Smith)

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\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship  
Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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